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Washington coy on Venezuela's Guaido, still recognizes 2015 National Assembly

Reuters

January 4, 2023 8:05 PM EST · Updated 6 months ago



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Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido speaks during an interview with Reuters, in Caracas, Venezuela, December 6, 2022. REUTERS/Gaby Oraa

WASHINGTON, Jan 4 (Reuters) - The United States still recognizes Venezuela's 2015 National Assembly after a recent shakeup and will keep coordinating with its former leader Juan Guaido "and other like-minded individuals," the White House said on Wednesday.

Washington's years-long recognition of Guaido as Venezuela's legitimate interim president was called into question late last month when the country's opposition National Assembly stripped him of the title and dissolved his government.

In a press call, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said the United States still recognized that assembly, elected in 2015, as Venezuela's "last remaining democratic institution."

Asked whether Washington still recognized Guaidó as interim president, Kirby said he did not want to "get into hypotheticals" and promised the United States would "coordinate with him and other like-minded members" of the opposition legislature.

Axios reported on Wednesday evening that a State Department official confirmed the United States no longer recognizes Guaidó as Venezuela's leader. The State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump recognized Guaidó as Venezuela's legitimate president after President Nicolas Maduro won re-election in a 2018 vote that Washington and other Western governments called a sham.

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Maduro has maintained his grip on power supported by the Venezuelan military as well as Russia, China, Cuba and Iran.

The interim government's dissolution raised questions about the future of assets in its control. Opposition lawmakers voted last week to appoint a commission to govern the assets.

Kirby's comments echoed State Department spokesperson Ned Price, who on Tuesday left open the question of Guaido's official designation.

"We'll continue to coordinate with him as a member of the 2015 national assembly and with other like-minded democratic actors in Venezuela to support the Venezuelan people in their aspirations of democracy, rule of law, and prosperity in their country," Price told reporters.

Washington's position on the need for free and fair elections in Venezuela and on Maduro had not changed, Price said.

Reporting by Trevor Hunnicutt; Writing by Katharine Jackson and Brendan O'Boyle; Editing by Stephen Coates

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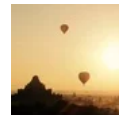
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






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




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